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## THE DAY BOOK OF BENJAMIN WALKER, 1846

*By Emmitt R. Walker and Judith F. Russell<sup>1</sup>*

Benjamin Walker was born on December 27, 1811, in South Carolina, and moved with his family, friends, and kinsman to the newly opened Mississippi Territory around 1815. His father, Samuel Walker, Jr., had been a state legislator in South Carolina and became involved in Alabama politics soon after the state was formed from the Mississippi Territory. Samuel Walker served several terms in the Alabama House of Representatives, and, before his death in 1841, was the speaker of the Alabama House. Benjamin's mother, Fannie Eddins Walker, was one of a large Eddins family, the children of Benjamin Eddins of South Carolina, a revolutionary war hero.<sup>2 3</sup>

When Benjamin Walker's father died, he bequeathed the "plantation on which he now lives in Lincoln County, Tennessee" to Benjamin. Soon thereafter, Benjamin was on the move along with many other people of the time, heading West. In 1846, about the time his wife Susan gave birth to their first child, Benjamin Walker was living in Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi, and from there he set out to Texas to assess the prospects of the newly admitted state. He was accompanied by his second cousin, Benjamin Holloway. The namesake of both of the cousins was probably their great grandfather, Benjamin Bell of South Carolina, said to have been killed in a Cherokee uprising in 1779. Their family line also included their grandmother Martha-Jefferson Bell Walker, second cousin of President Thomas Jefferson.

Among the supplies that Benjamin bought for his Texas trip was a four-by-six-inch leather-bound journal. One the first page he wrote "*Benjamin Walkers Day Book, Bot in Aberdeen, Monroe County, Miss. September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1846.*" The *Day Book* is still in the possession of the Walker family in Austin, Texas, and has been transcribed by family members. Some of the penciled pages are growing dim, but the pages written in ink are as clear as when they were written almost 160 years ago and the handwriting is legible.

The *Day Book's* pages chronicle one person's impressions of life of East Texas in the autumn of 1846. Benjamin wrote about Texas prospects ("good prairie land, but badly timbered") and dangers ("a cure for snake bite"). While traveling more than a thousand miles looking for land, he recorded, in addition to the everyday details of the journey, many folk remedies that he heard about, including one he thought would interest his wife: how to keep calico from fading.

The travelers often stayed with friends and family members. Benjamin, the record keeper, carefully noted each expense, however small, not only for himself but also so that he could settle up with his cousin — it seems that they had agreed to share expenses equally. Although they may have been self-reliant when it came to finding game for food, they had to spend hard cash for whiskey and for each of the river crossings they made by ferry. Many cross-

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ings are listed; usually the price was \$1.00 per person, which was about the same amount that they paid for their overnight stays.

At one point in the journey, or possibly on an entirely different trip, Benjamin visited the city of New Orleans. He made notes in his *Daybook* as he outfitted himself in good style, buying "2 pair casimer pants" at \$5 each, at a time when cattle sold for \$3 a head and land for less than \$1 per acre.

After his trip to Texas, Benjamin bought land in Arkansas, recording the transactions in his *Daybook*. From 1849 until the mid-1850s he purchased at least seven Military Warrants for land in Arkansas, plus some other acreage, and within a few years he had moved his family there. The family members are recorded in Polk Township, Arkansas County, Arkansas, in the Census of Population of 1860, but sometime after 1865 they moved to Texas. Benjamin died about 1868 in Hornsby Bend, Travis County, Texas. His descendants are now spread throughout the western states. His *Daybook*, transcribed below with his spelling and grammar intact, is his legacy to his twenty-first century family and readers.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Benjamin Walkers*  
**DAY BOOK**

This is a note book of Grandpa Walkers.<sup>1</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

*Bot in Aberdeen*  
*Monroe County Miss*  
*September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1846*

A Receipt for the Cure of Pneuralgia

6 grains of Bromide of Pottassium daily  
One month. Decrease one grain each  
month until cured.

\*\*\*\*\*

Shackelford \_\_\_\_\_  
Bot \_\_\_\_\_ 124 lbs Rope [?]

cinchanedic [?]

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

B.T. Emry hickory \_\_\_\_\_  
The probate court to be holden [?] in the  
post On the 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Monday in July

[Page torn out]<sup>2</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

Colic in Horses

Take one pound of Epsom Salts. dissolve  
it in not more than a half gallon of boiling  
\_\_\_\_\_ water. drench the animal with it.  
when you can hold your finger in it two  
seconds. don't be afraid of scalding the  
animal and a cure will result.

\*\*\*\*\*

We arrived on the Sabine Riv on the 30<sup>th</sup> of  
Sept 1846. Croßsed over into Texas Sabine  
County thence up the river to Jas. M.  
Burroughs<sup>6</sup> through a poor pine hill country  
from thence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Oct to San  
Augustine a poor Pine Hill country within a  
few miles of San Augustine where we came  
to good looking \_\_\_\_\_land which produces  
pretty well but badly timbered. stayed all  
nite 11 miles west of San Augustine at  
Garretts from thence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Oct to  
Nacogdoches 3<sup>rd</sup> from thence acroßs the  
Angelina and up too miles to Sackville

Easters <sup>7</sup> & stayed until Monday morning	Coß [loss?] in exchange	.35
the 5 Oct from thence acroßs some poor	Ferriage at Sabine	.25
Prairies & acroßs the Neches River.	At Olfords 8 Nov 184__	2.00
	At Nachitochis	3.00

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

Wm. W. Hill <sup>8</sup>		
Washing[ton] County Independence	Ferriage acroßs the Bonge [?] in	.20
15 miles up the Brazos Cavinaugh	Louisiana	
Washing[ton] County F __ guhas 3 miles	At Grays	2.00
____ Thomas [?] Birdwell <sup>9</sup> near ____	Paid at Squires	2.00
	At ____ whiskey	.20
Sackville A. Easter addreßs	Ferriages at Washiton	.40
Nacogdoches County Douglas Texas	Paid at ____ on Sisily Island	2.00
	Ferriage at Mißs River	1.50
L.[S.?] A. Easter in Cherokee County	Ferriage at Te____	.50
	Paid at Rodney	4.00
John G. Berry <sup>10</sup> San Augustine Texas	At Port Gibson for apple	.30
	At Lotts	2.50
	At Jones	2.00
	At Beamons	2.00
	At Irvines	2.00
	For whiskey at Spring ____t	.40
	At ____	2.00

\*\*\*\*\*

Settled

\*\*\*\*\*

From Judge Lipscomb to Washington		
[18?] From thence to Montgomery 30	B. Walker bot from John Shackelford	
from Montgomery to Huntsville 30	2789 lbs of fodder a 1 cent per pound.	
miles from thence to Crockett 30 miles		
from thence to Easters 40 from thence to		
Nacogdoches 25 miles from thence to San		
Augustine 35 from thence Olford 40 from		
thence to Nacatosh 40 from thence to		
Grays 37 from thence to Iquines 38 miles		
from thence to Sicily Island 32 from		
thence to Rodney 35 from thence to Port		
Gibson 26 and to Eddins 11 from thence		
to Raymond 36 from thence to Clinton,		
Livingston, Canton 38 from thence		
Koscinsko 45 to Starkville 63. <sup>11</sup>		

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

Washington Oct 24	.50	Settled	Paid	
Ferriage acroß Beas [Bravos?]				
Oct 29 one flask wiskey	.25			*****
Oct 30	3.00			
Boots for Holloway		Holloway paid		\$6.00
[Oct] 31 for ____ in Cincinnati	.50	Wm. Coopwood		5.00
____ shoein J.H. horse	2.00	Walker		5.00
Nov 1 for staying all nite at	2.00	Wm. Coopwood		10.00
Dillards'		Holloway		2.00
Paid ____	.50	Holloway		1.00
Whiskey		Holloway		5.00
Staid at Mack Master	2.00			
Ferriage at Nechea	.20	Expenses of Coopwood, Holloway		
Nov 5 for whiskey ____	1.00	____ Walker to Arkansas October 1847		
Loß in exchange	.25			
At Nacogdoches	2.00	Coopwood paid to Walker		\$15.00
At San Augustine	2.00	Holloway paid ____		14.00

\*\*\*\*\*

	Coopwood paid	15.00
	Holloway do.	14.00
A receipt for the cure of Dysentary.	Walker do.	15.20

Take equal portions of peach tree & elder bark the out side bark scraped off. make a tea & drink freely. is said to cure in 12 hours.		Cts.
	Due to Coopwood	26 2/3
	Due from Holloway	75 1/3
	Due to Walker	46 1/3

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Bill of Expenses to Arkansas

## A remedy for snake bite.

Paid first nite Pontotoc	\$4.50	A weed called croßswork. It grows various height. the leaves grow out of the stem to a T at a place opposite each other. The too next leaves come out from opposite sides of the stem and so on croßsing or changing sides as they grow ____ the leaf is long ____ narrow and the top side quite rough. take the roots stem ____ leaves. bruise and boil in sweet milk. take it ____ ____ ____ apply some to the bite to affect a cure.
2. Nite Oxford	3.75	
Ferriage at Talhatchy	.30	
3. Esq. Ellisons	2.65	
4 at Robertson	[??]	
5. at Houston	3.60	
6. at Hellena	5.25	
7. at Bro ____ona	2.25	
Ferriage acroßs the White River	.75	
8. at Robertsons	1.80	
9. at Wm Robinsons	[??]	
10. at the gun ____Comills	2.50	
11. at Stillwell	12.00	
At Montgomery	1.50	

\*\*\*\*\*

## B. Walker

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\*\*\*\*\*

At Wm Robinsons	.00		
Hendy	2.75	C. McClendon <sup>12</sup> D ____ to	
Croßsing White River	.60	B. Walker	
		309 lbs bacon	
	\$44.20	4	
Holloway & Walker at Pike	1.60		
At Helena	3.00	12.36	
Ferriage at Helena	1.00	21.00	for corn
Ferriage at Coldwater	.30	33.36	
At Poone	2.12	9.00	
At Coffeville	3.00	24.36	PAID
At Houston	2.00		
At Pikeville	.25		
	\$13.27		
	[divide by 2]	L [?, possibly S] Holloway to B. Walker	
	\$6.63	[Du?]	
Holloway due to Walker	\$6.63	15 stacks fodder	
	.46	weighing	
	7.09	1227 lbs ech	
		15	
		18405 at ? ct	
		9202	\$92.02
44.20 [divide by 3] 14.73 1/3	\$44.20	To 108 head stock	
		hogs at 1 dollar	
	\$ cts	per head	\$108.00

\*\*\*\*\*

15 head stock  
cattle at \$3.00 per  
head \$45.00  
1000 bushel corn  
at 25 cts per  
bushel \$250.00

The above recs and certrificates enclosed  
by Registered letter to W.H. Halliburton<sup>14</sup>  
of Dewitt Arkansas. at McDade Bastrop  
Co T\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Due 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 1849

\*\*\*\*\*

Benjamin Eddins  
Or Or [possibly "do do as in ditto"]  
To Benjamin Walker  
Fifteen dollars loaned  
Money 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1850

Benjamin Walker Bot of Joel M. Acker  
one land warrant No. 59251 calling for  
160 of land and issued in the name of  
William Cothran late a corporal in Capt.  
Stewarts company Battalion MiBs  
Voluntary under date of May 30<sup>th</sup> 1849.

Paid B. Walker

\*\*\*\*\*

Benjamin Walker Bot of Benjamin L.  
Howell late a Sergeant of Capt Ackers  
company 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment MiBs Volunteers  
one land warrant No. 51580 calling for  
160 acres of land issued to said Benj. L.  
Howell 22<sup>nd</sup> day of March 1849.

Jan 28<sup>th</sup> 1885<sup>13</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

D.R. James to T.J. Walker  
To 180 lbs pork at 5 cts. 900

T. N. Porter  
Helena, Ark.

James, Goyens  
To 664 lbs pork at 5 cts 3320

Mr. I hangr [?]  
Memphis, Tenn

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

Rect. of P.J. Crutchfield of State of  
Arkansas

Between Millers and Connells some good  
prairie land

Receives for \$157.53 N [Warrant?]  
No. 7314 Littlerock Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> 1856 to Benj.  
Walker of Arkansas Co. Ark. Being for  
315 6/100 acres of land.

\*\*\*\*\*

To wash Calico.

Rect of C.P. Bashard, receive for \$50 for  
40 acres land - to Benj Walker of Ark.  
County Ark. Into Little Rock Ark 9 Nov  
1852.

Infuse three gills of salt in one gallon of  
boiling water and put the calico in while  
hot and leave it till cold and in this way  
the colours are sun dried permanent.

\*\*\*\*\*

W.W. Adams \_\_\_\_ of State of Ark.  
Certificate of Comtion by Benj. Walker of  
Mil Land warrant no. 43180 in name of  
Mich'l Sheriden for 160 acres of land also  
of Mil Land warrant No. 47130 in name of  
Wm. Calvert for 160 acres also M.L.  
Warrant no 13801 in name of Hardy  
Robinson for 80 acres land

\*\*\*\*\*

Po[r]tage from Miller to N. Orleans

Bot in New Orleans	2.00
2 pair casimer pants	10.00
1 ____ common ____	2.00
1 vest	2.50
1 Blanket coat	2.00
1 shirt	1.50
1 pocket knife	1.00
1 purse	.25

M.L. W. 38489 in name of N.C. Hawkins  
for 76.88 acre all \_\_\_\_ 9 Nov 1852.

\*\*\*\*\*

Due Walker

2.00

Take 1 Dram Ext Bark

\_ oz aloes

\_ oz Rhubarb

7 oz Black Snake Root

1 oz Pesuman Barks

Paid

\*\*\*\*\*

[This is a very faint penciled page]

Gave to \_\_\_\_\_

Put the above mixture in one quart of good  
speritts. Take a common dram morning  
noon & at night so as cause at least 2 loose  
stools every 24 hours

\$10.00

5.00

5.00

5.00

5.00

2.00

32.00

17.88 Settled

To Holloway

To \_\_\_\_\_

[signed] Dock Jas. B. Vaught<sup>15</sup>

[signed] James B. Vaught

\*\*\*\*\*

Take 20 grs of Blue Maßs - 10 of specie  
- 15 of Calomel - mix & make in to six  
Pills. Take 2 pills every 4 hours - until  
you have taking the last 2 pills. If they  
should not purge in two hours after taking  
last 2 pills - take a tea cup of strong sima  
tea every 2 hours until they have purged  
some four or five times. Any motion over  
five restrain by taking Landinains opium  
or paregoric - thus commences your  
Batters War \_ - \_ n teas as Drinks.

\*\*\*\*\*

September the 12<sup>th</sup> 1846 loaned S.  
Holloway<sup>16</sup> 50 cts. Paid.

Walker bot for Saml Holloway \_\_\_\_\_  
pounds of pork \_\_\_\_\_ in 1846. \$5.46 Paid

Due Walker from S. Holloway \$2.30. The  
above is paid except 30 cents. [signed] B.  
Walker

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

	\$ cts
From Holloway	10.37
At Nacogdoches	5.00
Holloway paid at Jones	1.00
At Beeman	5.00
At Theens	2.00
	23.37
To be taken from	5.00
	18.37

Town 2 Range 3  
C.C. & I. W. Alday [?]

Walker loaned to S. Holloway on the 24<sup>th</sup>  
of January 1848 \$25. 00 to pay for  
Whiting gin.

\*\*\*\*\*

Settled

N[?]o Csamam \_\_\_\_\_ t

12.27

[x] 15

18405

\*\*\*\*\*

Walker paid for Holloway

To one pr Boots

\$3.00

For shoeing horse

2.00

\$5.00

Walker paid for Mitchell

2.05

Mitchell paid for Walker

\$15.00

Holloway and Walker Expenses from

Washington, Texas home

Total divided by 2

\$40.75

20.37 \_

Holloway paid

18.37 \_

\*\*\*\*\*

[Scratch page of additions, subtractions,  
and divisions of costs]

